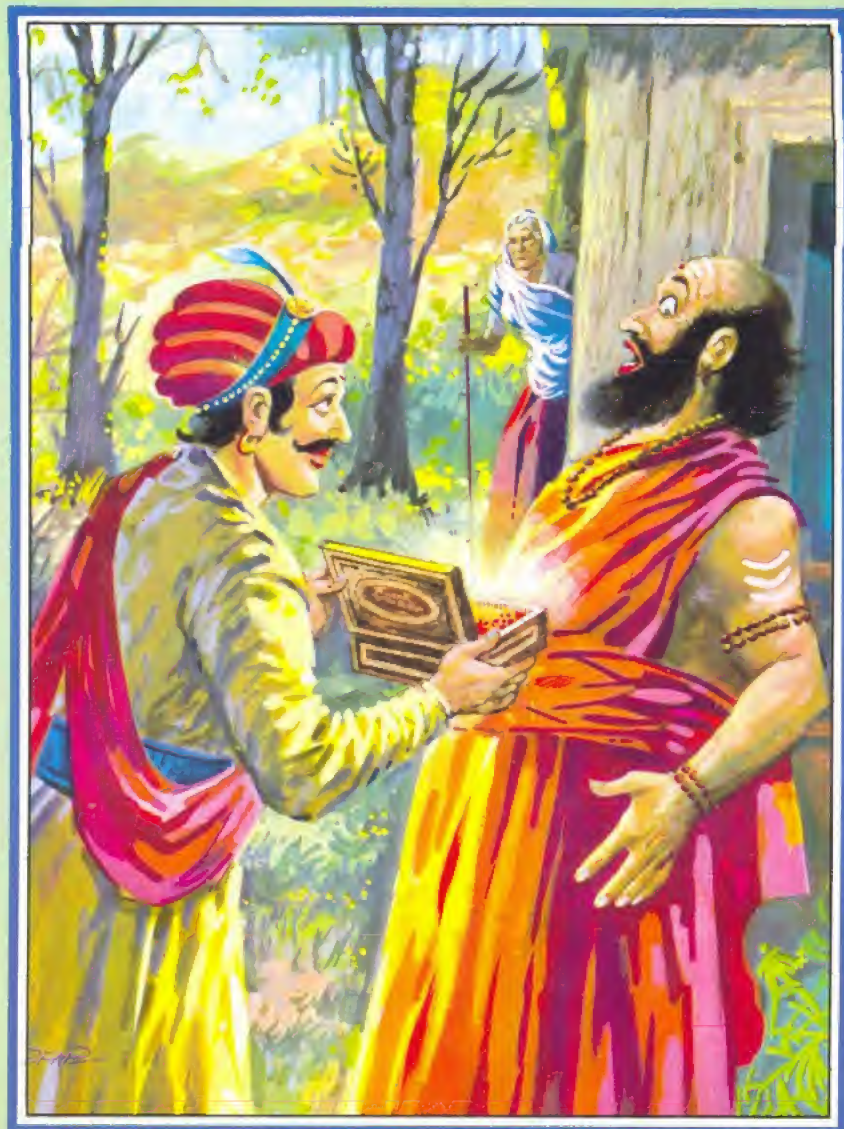




Vol. 618 Rs. 25

# Birbal to the Rescue



Amar Chitra Katha: the Glorious Heritage of India



## BIRBAL TO THE RESCUE

The wit and wisdom of Birbal had endeared him not only to Akbar, but also to a vast majority of the subjects of the Mughal empire. He had the rare distinction of achieving immense popularity during his lifetime, next only to that of Akbar. He was a good administrator, a good soldier and perhaps what pleased Akbar the most—a good jester. Less known is the fact that he was also a good poet. He wrote under the pen-name, "Brahma" and a collection of his poems is preserved in the Bharatpur Museum.

Though popularly known as Birbal, his real name was Maheshdas. It is believed that he belonged to a poor brahmin family of Trivikrampur (now known as Tikawanpur) on the banks of the River Yamuna. But it was only by virtue of his sharp intellect that he rose to be a minister at the court of Akbar. His phenomenal success made many courtiers jealous of him and if the popular accounts are to be believed, they were ever busy plotting against him. According to popular legend even his death, while he was on an expedition to Afghanistan at the head of a large military force, was due to treachery. Though he was killed in the battle, the expedition was successful and subdued the turbulent province.

Akbar was so deeply moved, when he heard the news of Birbal's death, that he burst forth into a couplet and lamented, "Birbal, you never hurt the helpless. You always gave them whatever you had. I am helpless now and yet you have left nothing for me."

Akbar had found in Birbal a true friend and sympathiser. Of the handful of followers of the Din-e-Elahi, the new faith preached by Akbar, there was only one Hindu, Birbal.

Script:  
Meera Ugra

Illustrations:  
Ram Wazerkar

### **AMAR CHITRA KATHA:**

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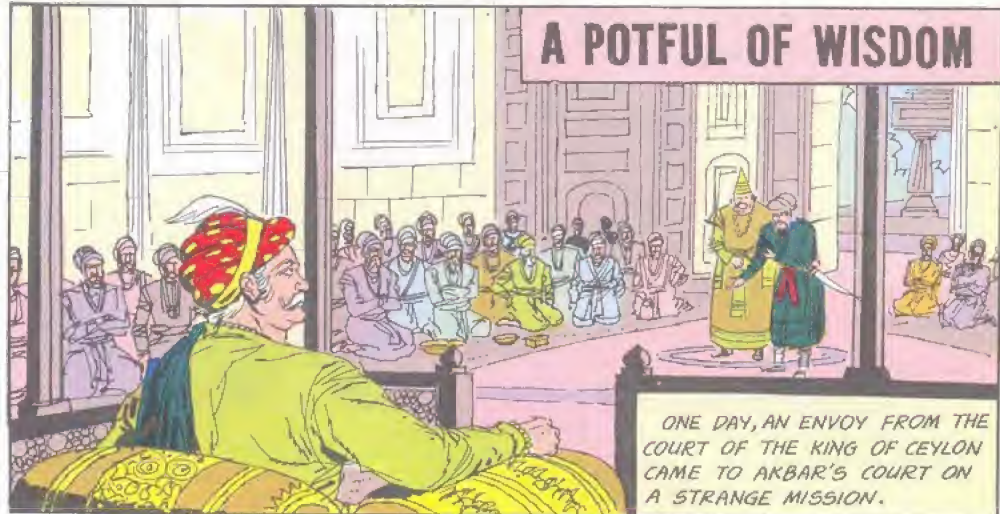
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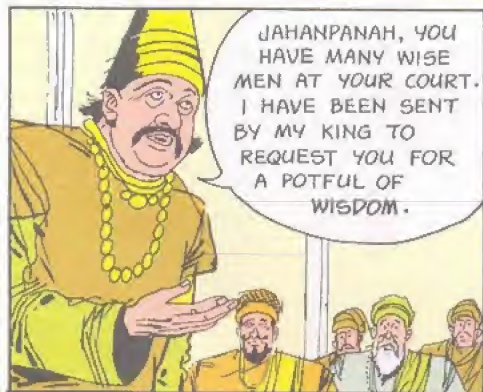
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## A POTFUL OF WISDOM



ONE DAY, AN ENVOY FROM THE COURT OF THE KING OF CEYLON CAME TO AKBAR'S COURT ON A STRANGE MISSION.



JAHANPANAH, YOU HAVE MANY WISE MEN AT YOUR COURT. I HAVE BEEN SENT BY MY KING TO REQUEST YOU FOR A POTFUL OF WISDOM.



A POTFUL OF WISDOM? WHAT A RIDICULOUS REQUEST!



THE KING OF CEYLON IS OUT TO BAFFLE US.

AND HE'LL SUCCEED. NO ONE, NOT EVEN BIRBAL, CAN GET US OUT OF THIS ONE.





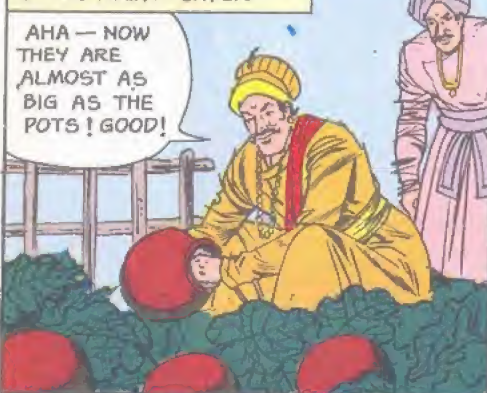
AT THE PUMPKIN PATCH —

GIVE ME ONE  
OF THOSE  
POTS.BIRBAL CAREFULLY  
PLACED THE POT  
OVER A PUMPKIN  
FLOWER.NOW PLACE THE  
OTHER POTS IN  
THE SAME  
MANNER.WHEN THE ATTENDANT  
FINISHED PLACING THE  
LAST POT —KEEP AN EYE ON  
THESE, AND DON'T  
LET THEM BE  
MOVED.I'LL HAVE  
THEM COLLECTED  
LATER.ANY TIME,  
HUZUR.

A FEW WEEKS LATER —



A FORTNIGHT LATER —

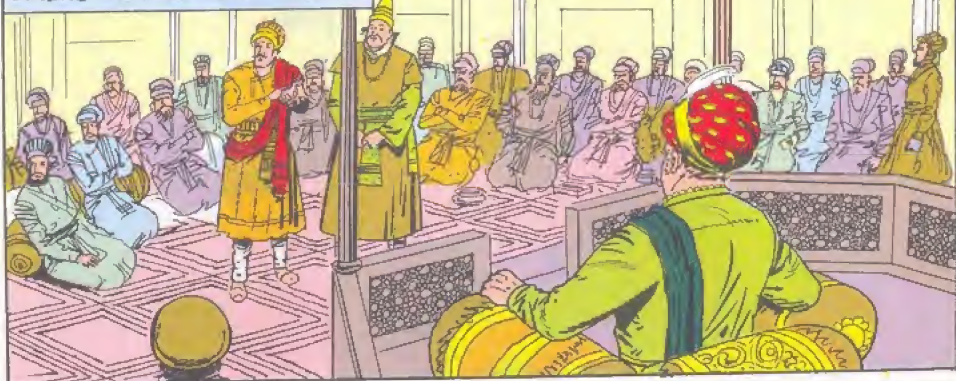


LATER BIRBAL HAD THE ENVOY SUMMONED TO COURT.





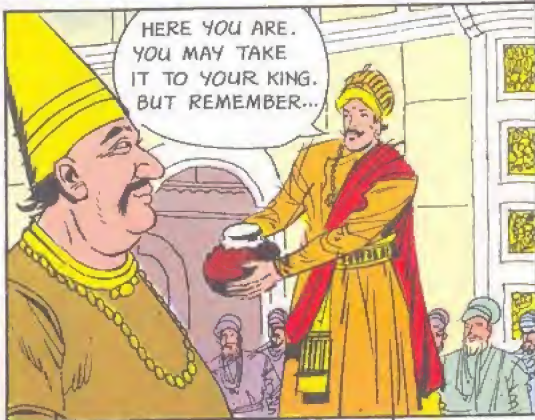
BIRBAL CLAPPED HIS HANDS —



THE NEXT MOMENT, HIS ATTENDANT WALKED SOLEMNLY IN, CARRYING A TRAY WITH A POT ON IT.



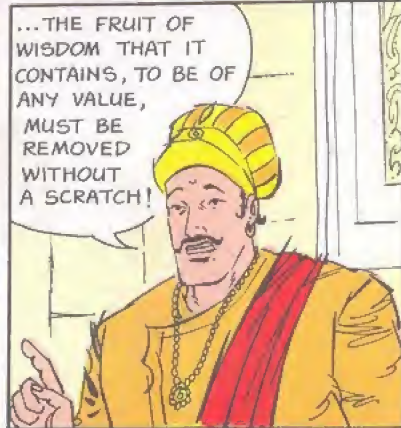
HERE YOU ARE. YOU MAY TAKE IT TO YOUR KING. BUT REMEMBER...



...OUR PRECIOUS POT MUST BE RETURNED EMPTY AND INTACT. AND...



...THE FRUIT OF WISDOM THAT IT CONTAINS, TO BE OF ANY VALUE, MUST BE REMOVED WITHOUT A SCRATCH!







AS SOON AS THE ENVOY LEFT—

BIRBAL, I AM CURIOUS  
TO HAVE A LOOK AT  
THE FRUIT OF WISDOM.  
YOU SAID YOU HAVE  
FIVE MORE.

I'LL HAVE  
THEM SENT TO  
YOU, JAHAN-  
PANAH.



WHEN THE OTHER POTS WERE BROUGHT,  
AKBAR LOOKED INTO ONE OF THEM...



HA! HA! HA! THE FRUIT OF  
WISDOM INDEED! IT WILL  
CERTAINLY MAKE THE KING  
OF CEYLON A WISER MAN,  
THOUGH!



# THE EMPEROR'S TOUCH



ONE DAY, AN OLD WOMAN AND HER WIDOWED DAUGHTER-IN-LAW CAME TO BIRBAL.



MY SON HAD SERVED IN THE ROYAL ARMY FOR TWENTY YEARS. BUT NOW, HE IS DEAD AND WE HAVE NO ONE TO TURN TO!

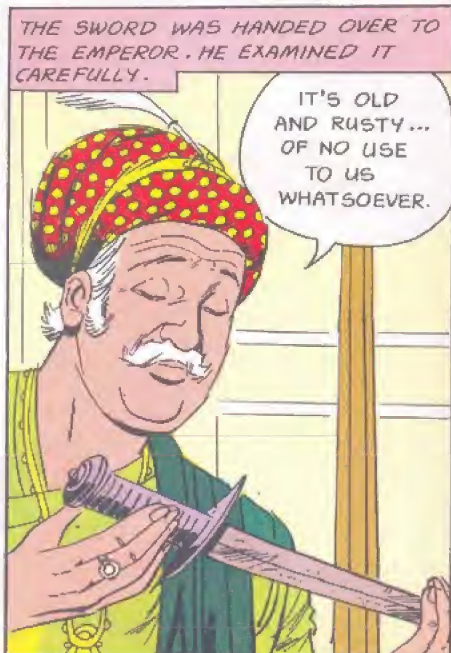
OUR EMPEROR IS KIND AND GENEROUS. HE WILL HELP YOU. DO AS I SAY.



THE FOLLOWING DAY, AT COURT—

JAHANPANAH, THIS SWORD ONCE WIELDED BY MY SON HAS WON MANY BATTLES FOR YOU. SO, PLEASE KEEP IT IN THE ARMOURY.

LET ME SEE IT.



THE SWORD WAS HANDED OVER TO THE EMPEROR. HE EXAMINED IT CAREFULLY.

IT'S OLD AND RUSTY... OF NO USE TO US WHATSOEVER.



HE GAVE THE SWORD TO AN ATTENDANT.

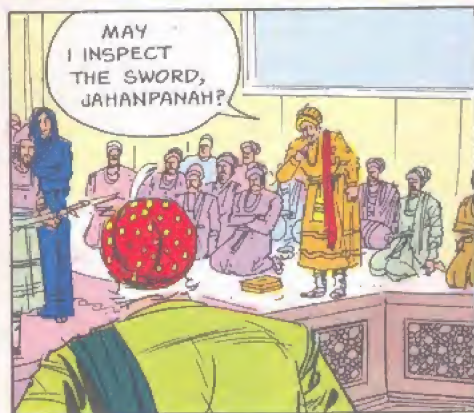
RETURN IT TO HER  
AND GIVE HER FIVE  
GOLD COINS FOR  
HER TROUBLE.



JUST  
FIVE GOLD  
COINS!



MAY  
I INSPECT  
THE SWORD,  
JAHANPANAH?



BIRBAL TOOK THE  
SWORD...

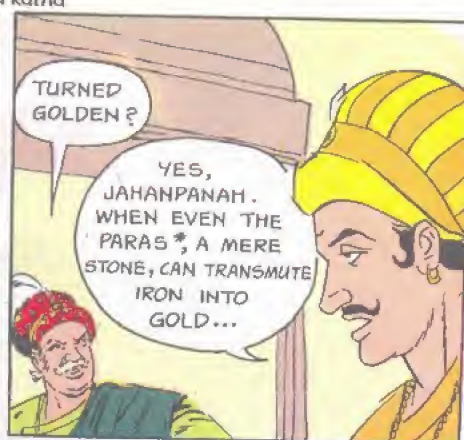
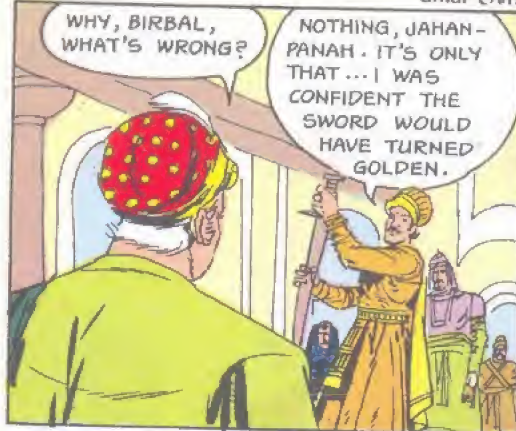


...AND LOOKED AT IT CLOSELY...



...AGAIN AND AGAIN.





\* A LEGENDARY STONE CREDITED WITH THE POWER OF CHANGING IRON INTO GOLD



# A WIDOW'S SAVINGS

THE RICH AND THE POOR, THE YOUNG AND THE OLD, ALL SOUGHT BIRBAL'S HELP WHEN THEY WERE WRONGED. ONE DAY AN OLD WIDOW CAME TO SEE HIM.

HELP ME, HUZUR.  
I'VE BEEN  
SWINDLED.

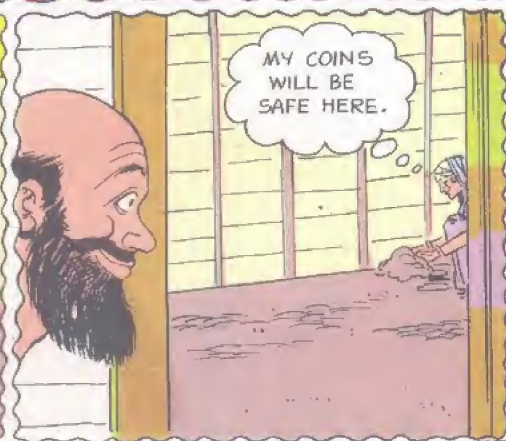
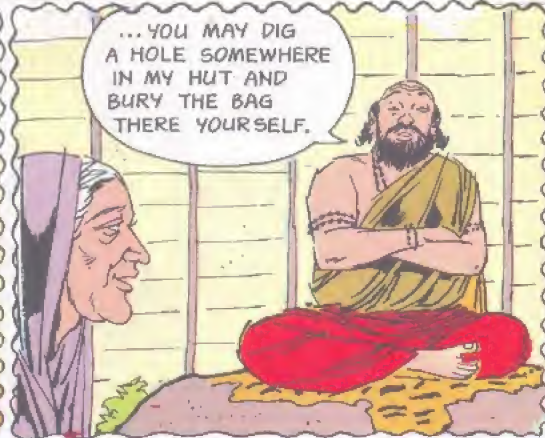
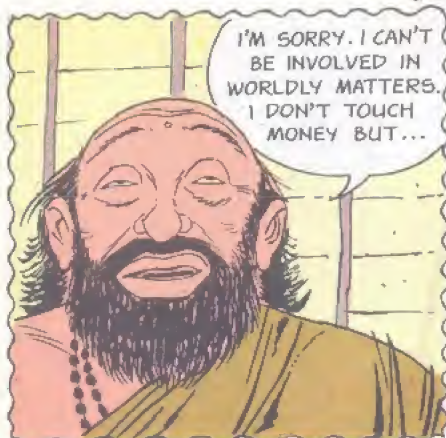
BY  
WHOM?

IT'S A LONG STORY,  
HUZUR. SIX MONTHS  
AGO, I DECIDED TO  
GO ON A  
PILGRIMAGE.

BUT I WAS WORRIED  
ABOUT MY MONEY.  
I DIDN'T KNOW  
WHERE TO  
KEEP IT.

"FINALLY, I WENT TO  
A MENDICANT."

HERE IS A BAG OF  
COPPER COINS—ALL THAT  
I HAVE IN THIS WORLD.  
PLEASE KEEP IT FOR ME.  
IT WILL BE SAFE WITH  
YOU!





YOU KNOW  
WHERE YOU'VE  
BURIED IT! FIND  
IT AND TAKE  
IT.

BUT, DON'T SPEAK  
ABOUT MONEY TO  
ME. I DON'T EVEN  
WANT TO HEAR  
THAT WORD.

"SO I WENT TO THE CORNER."

IT'S GONE!

"I COULDN'T BELIEVE MY EYES."

O HOLY ONE,  
MY COINS! WHERE  
ARE MY COINS?

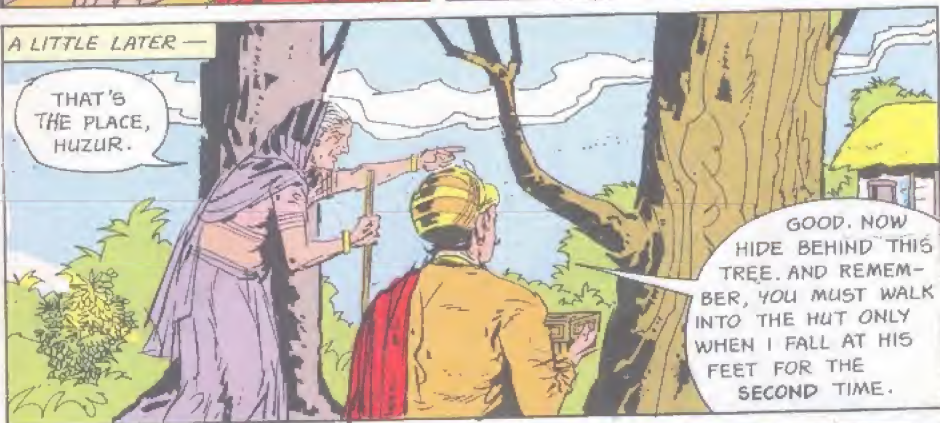
BEGONE,  
WOMAN. DON'T  
BOTHER ME WITH  
SUCH WORLDLY  
MATTERS.







A LITTLE LATER —



BIRBAL WENT INTO THE HUT AND FELL PROSTRATE IN FRONT OF THE MENDICANT.



BLESS ME, MASTER.

MAY YOU LIVE LONG, MY CHILD.

I HAVE HEARD PEOPLE TALK ABOUT YOUR SPIRITUAL EMINENCE. TODAY I HAVE HAD THE GOOD FORTUNE OF RECEIVING YOUR BLESSINGS.

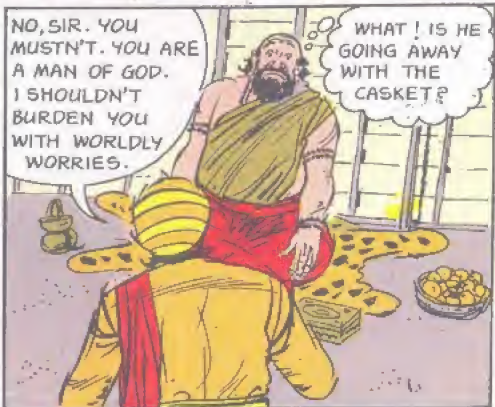


I WONDER WHAT HE HAS IN THE CASKET. GOLD? JEWELS?



HOLY ONE, I HATE TO TROUBLE YOU WITH THE PROBLEMS WE FOOLISH MORTALS HAVE. BUT...

SPEAK UP, CHILD. LET ME HELP YOU IF I CAN.



NO, SIR. YOU MUSTN'T. YOU ARE A MAN OF GOD. I SHOULDN'T BURDEN YOU WITH WORLDLY WORRIES.

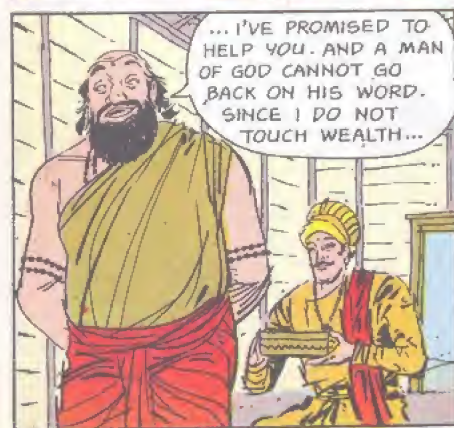
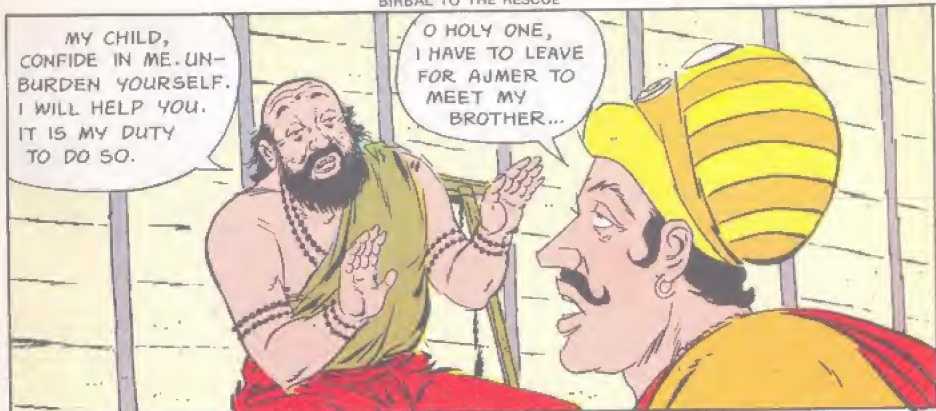
WHAT! IS HE GOING AWAY WITH THE CASKET?



BUT...BUT WHO ELSE CAN I TRUST IN THIS WICKED, WICKED WORLD? PLEASE GUIDE ME.

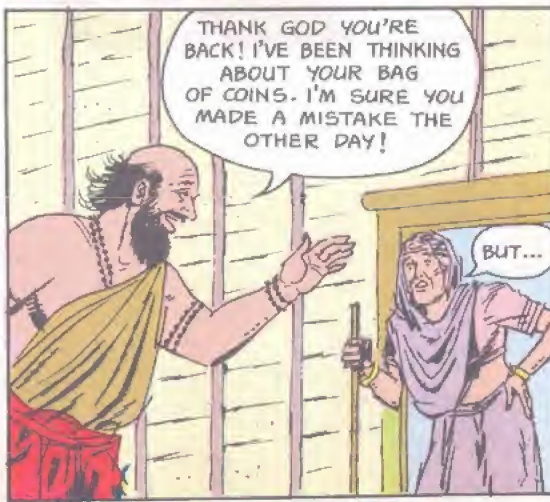
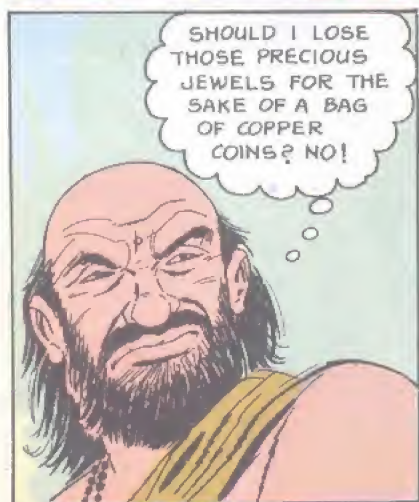
HE IS WAVERING. I MUST LAY HANDS ON THAT CASKET.







AS THE OLD WOMAN ENTERED THE HUT —











# THE PERFECT PORTRAIT

ONE DAY, BIRBAL WAS SURPRISED TO FIND THE NORMALLY CHEERFUL COURT ARTIST LOOKING GLUM.

WHAT'S THE MATTER, MY FRIEND?

MY REPUTATION IS AT STAKE.

BUT YOU ARE THE BEST ARTIST THE COURT HAS EVER KNOWN. I DON'T UNDERSTAND...

YOU WILL, WHEN I'VE TOLD YOU THE WHOLE STORY.

THE ARTIST TOOK BIRBAL TO HIS HOUSE AND SHOWED HIM FIVE PORTRAITS.

THEY ARE OF A RICH NOBLE.

AREN'T THESE OF THE SAME MAN?

"A MONTH AGO HE THREW ME  
A CHALLENGE."

"I BET, YOU CAN'T  
CREATE AN EXACT  
LIKENESS OF  
ME."

"I BET,  
I CAN."

"HE POSED AND I GOT DOWN TO WORK.  
AT LAST —"

"THAT'S ALL. I'LL  
GIVE THE PORTRAIT  
A FEW FINISHING  
TOUCHES AND  
BRING IT TO YOU  
TOMORROW."

"ON THE FOLLOWING DAY, WHEN I HANDED  
THE PORTRAIT TO HIM, CONFIDENT OF  
WINNING THE BET —"

"THIS WON'T DO!  
IT ISN'T AN EXACT  
LIKENESS. I DON'T  
HAVE A BEARD!"

"BUT YOU DID  
HAVE ONE  
WHEN YOU  
POSED FOR  
THE PORTRAIT!"

"A BET IS A BET! AND AN EXACT  
LIKENESS AN EXACT LIKENESS!  
HERE! YOU MAY KEEP THIS AS  
A MEMENTO."

"PLEASE GIVE  
ME ANOTHER  
CHANCE."

"ALL RIGHT.  
YOU MAY  
TRY AGAIN."



"HE POSED FOR ME ONCE MORE.  
WHEN I TOOK THE FINISHED  
PORTRAIT TO HIM —"



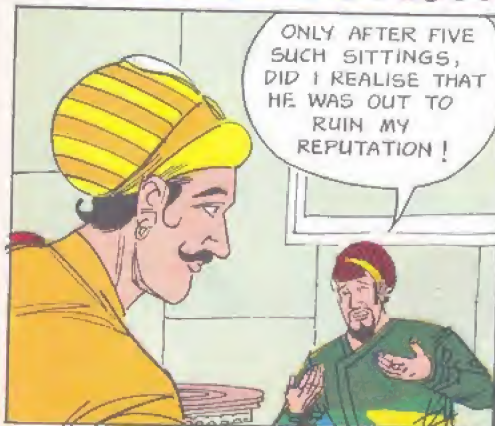
BUT  
WHY THIS  
MOUSTACHE?

DO I HAVE A  
MOUSTACHE?

YOU'VE  
SHAVED IT  
OFF TODAY.

NO MORE OF YOUR  
CHEEK, YOUNG MAN!  
THE COURT WILL  
SOON KNOW WHAT  
KIND OF ARTIST  
YOU ARE!

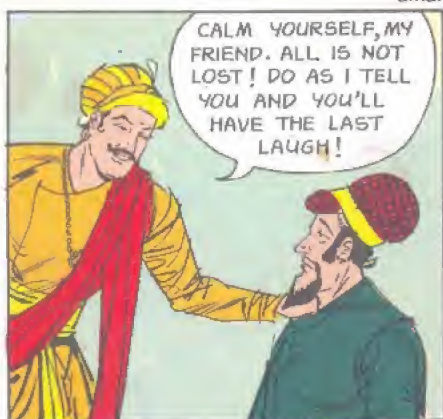
NO! PLEASE  
GIVE ME ANOTHER  
CHANCE!



ONLY AFTER FIVE  
SUCH SITTINGS,  
DID I REALISE THAT  
HE WAS OUT TO  
RUIN MY  
REPUTATION!



OH! WHAT A  
FOOL I'VE  
BEEN! HOW  
COULD I...





# SPEAK THE TRUTH BUT MAKE IT PLEASANT



IF BIRBAL'S NEIGHBOUR HAD A WEAKNESS, IT WAS TO HAVE HIS FORTUNE TOLD.

SUDDENLY —

YOU FRAUD! DON'T YOU DARE COME THIS WAY AGAIN!



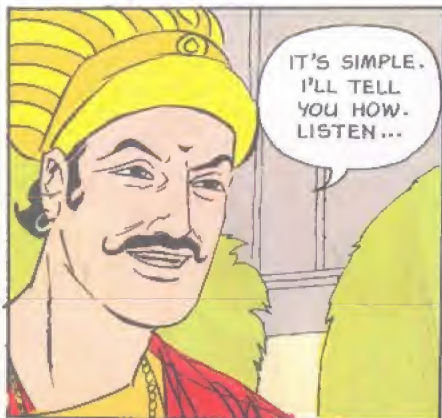
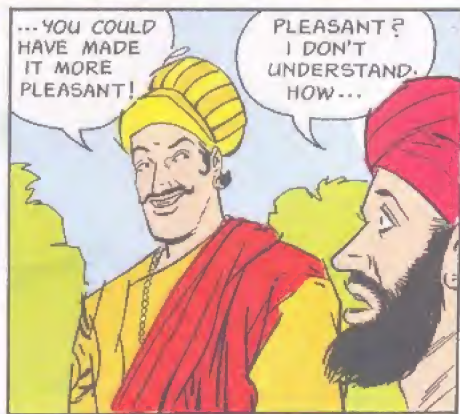
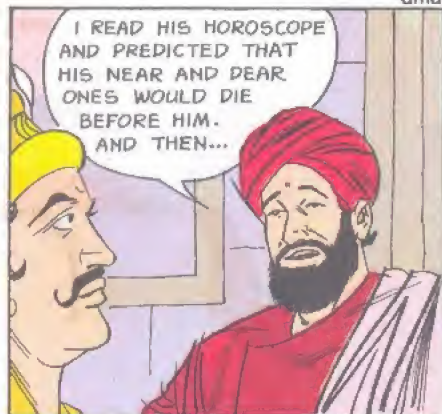
I WON'T! EVER!



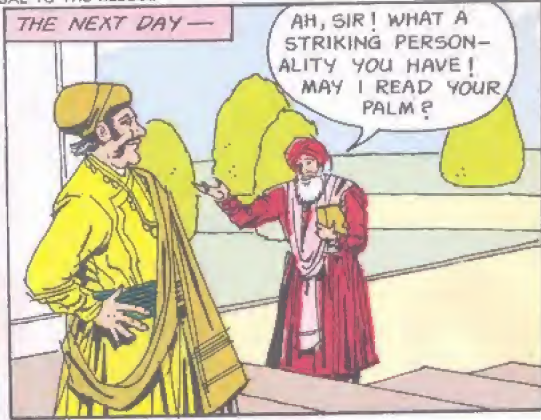
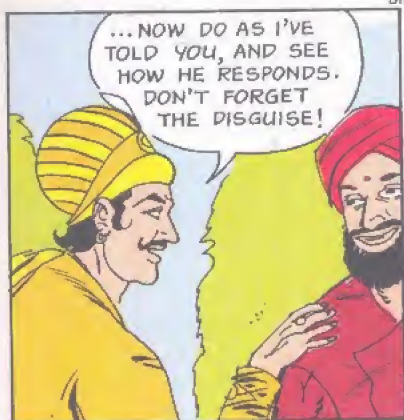
BIRBAL WENT UP TO THE MAN.

WHAT DID YOU DO TO MAKE HIM SO ANGRY?





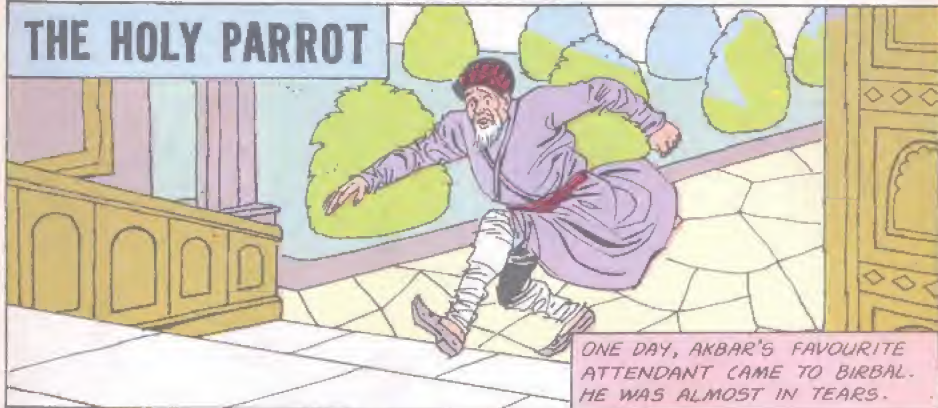








# THE HOLY PARROT



LATER, AT AKBAR'S COURT —



A HOLY BIRD,  
INDEED. HA!  
HA! HA!



SO THE TWO WENT TO THE ATTENDANT'S  
HOUSE. WHEN AKBAR SAW THE BIRD —



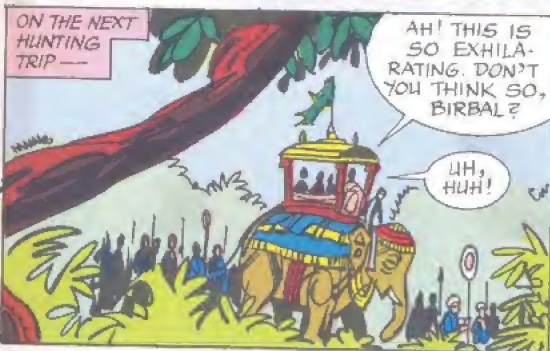
ONLY THEN DID AKBAR REMEMBER  
WHAT HE HAD TOLD HIS ATTENDANT.

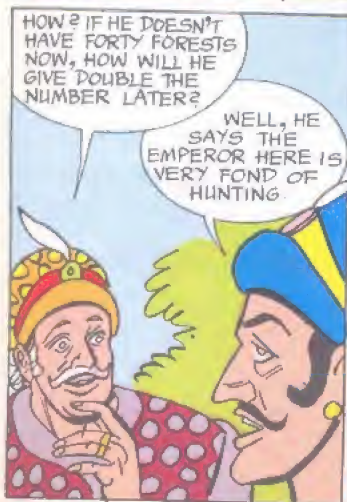
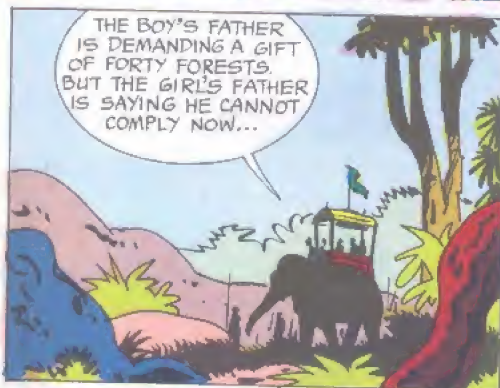




# AKBAR THE HUNTER

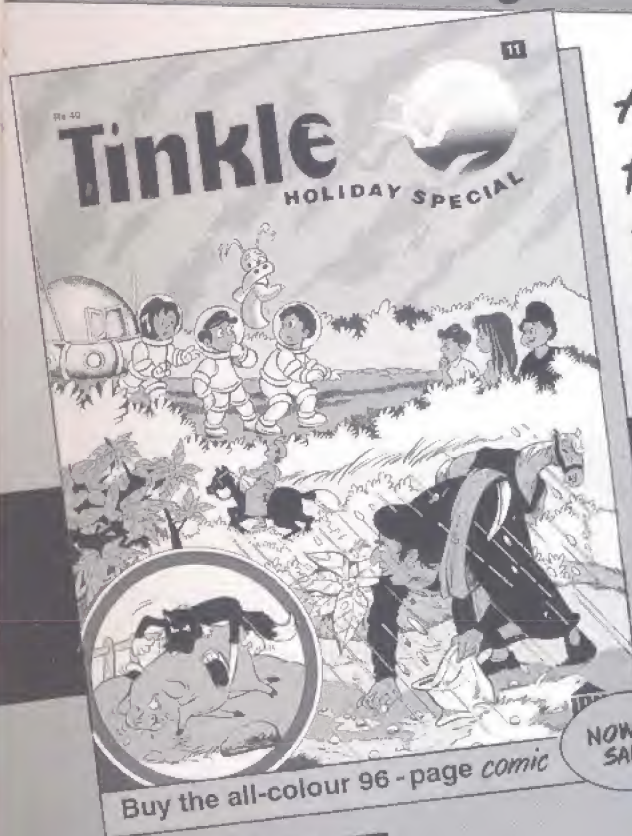
AKBAR WAS EXTREMELY FOND OF HUNTING. ONE DAY—







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